

She counted on John getting tired of a solitary life and his final meek return to her point of view.

John went home one evening to find Mary gone, bag and baggage. He tried to enjoy an evening of quiet reading, but found it lonesome work. He went to bed and tossed about half of the night. John stood this for two days. He received no word from his absent wife.

"She's gone to her sister's, of course," ruminated John, "or maybe to Uncle Jim's. At all events I won't chase her up."

Next day John was uneasy and unhappy. Time hung heavy on his hands. He could not attend to business and arranged for a vacation for a week.

"I'll go down and see Ellery Waite," he decided. "Just the thing! He's a true friend and will sympathize with me. Anyhow, it will do me good to talk affair over with him."

So John took the train to Brampton. It had been a rainy, stormy week and this had contributed to his wretchedness. The Waite's lived ten miles from town. Arrived in Brampton, John went to the village livery stable to hire a buggy to convey him to his friend's home. The liveryman shook his head definitely.

"No thoroughfare that way," was the positive explanation. "We started with a fare yesterday and had to turn back at the five-mile post at the creek."

"What's the trouble?" inquired John.

"Roadway washed out and the fields flooded. Wait a day or two and maybe we might make it."

But John was obstinate. He did not believe conditions were as bad as represented. Forthwith he started on foot for the Waite home. He regretted his rashness after he had managed to cross the overflowed creek at the risk of his life.

The rain had recommenced, the road was a continuous puddle. It had turned cold and a fierce wind al-

most swept him off his feet. So chilled and ill and exhausted was he; his journey nearly ended, that he was about to turn into an old wreck of a shed to rest when he caught sight of a light in the distant home of Waite. This infused him with brief courage. He staggered on his way and fairly sank to the doorstep of the house, panting, weak. Finally he knocked on the door. It opened.

John staggered to his feet to confront his wife. They stared at one another in sheer embarrassment and surprise. Mary found her voice first.

"Well!" she ejaculated. "You had to come after me, did you?"

"Not a bit of it!" retorted John, but faintly. "I never knew you were here. I came to see Waite."

"He's not here, nor his wife. A relative is ill and they're gone for two days. Well, you're a sight!"

"I'm sick, Mary," shivered John, wretchedly, and wavered past the doorway and sank to a chair, fairly done out.

Mary tried to look unconcerned. Then a wave of irresistible wifely pity and affection overcame her as she noted the pallor of her husband's face.

"You're soaked through," she said with abrupt briskness. "Get off your coat and your shoes and stockings. Here, I'll help you. To think of padding through all that mud and wet!"

It seemed actually grand to hear her scold, to the forlorn spouse. She soon had his feet in warm mustard water. She took his coat into the kitchen and hung it up to dry. She lighted a fire in the grate and placed him before it, cozy and warm in a comfortable armchair.

She hustled about and was gone in the kitchen for a spell and returned finally with a smoking dainty tray of tempting victuals.

John snuggled back in the chair after the revivifying repast, with a sense of rare satisfaction — and gratitude. He listened to the swish of familiar garments in the kitchen